

CHAPTER 1:

THE ROANOKE COLONIES

AND FORT RALEIGH, C. 1584-1590

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site commemorates the first English attempts at establishing a settlement in North America. The present area incorporated within the National Historic Site (NHS) includes a portion, at least, of the celebrated site of the Roanoke colonies, a series of abortive efforts sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh and others to establish a permanent English colony in the New World. The result of early exploratory efforts beginning with the Amadas and Barlowe expedition of 1584, the Roanoke settlement or the “Cittie of Raleigh” was chartered in 1587 and found abandoned in 1590. It included several dwellings, a “science center,” and a fort constructed by colonists and soldiers under the supervision of Ralph Lane, the governor of the 1585-1586 expedition. The fate of the 1587 colonists remains a mystery. When the governor of the 1587 Roanoke colony, John White, returned to the settlement in 1590, all of the settlers were gone, including his granddaughter, Virginia Dare—the first recorded English birth in North America.

EARLY ENGLISH EXPLORATION OF NORTH AMERICA

The early English colonization of Roanoke Island was a significant event in the gradual process of English settlement in the New World—a process that began with the English explorations of the western hemisphere in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.¹¹ The first English efforts to participate in the European takeover of the New World can be traced to the initiatives of Henry VII. In 1485, he put an end to civil strife in England, unifying the nation and bringing stability to the government. Henry VII then turned his attention to expanding commerce and encouraged English merchants to enter into foreign trade and,

¹¹Robert G. Ferris, ed., *Explorers and Settlers* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1968), 92-9. For additional background information on English colonization of the New World, see Oliver P. Chitwood, *A History of Colonial America* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1931), 9-15, 34-6; John B. Brebner, *The Explorers of North America, 1492-1806* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1933); and Herbert E. Bolton and Thomas M. Marshall, *The Colonization of North America, 1491-1783* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920), 104-51.

consequently, to invest in exploration. He briefly considered supporting Christopher Columbus's first voyage but later provided financial backing for John Cabot, the Italian who first visited the New World in 1496.¹² On Cabot's second voyage in 1497, he planted the first English flag on the North American mainland in what is now Canada. With this act, Cabot established England's claim to territory in the Western Hemisphere.¹³

Henry VII's efforts to encourage English exploration and trade in the New World were not continued under the rule of his son, Henry VIII, who concentrated his energies on building a more European-oriented merchant fleet.¹⁴ However, Cabot's endeavors were championed by Henry VIII's daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, who came to the throne in 1558. Elizabeth's goal was to strike a balance of power in Europe and to lessen the threat of Spanish hegemony—a threat most obvious in the newly established Spanish monopoly of trade in the New World.¹⁵ Although many Englishmen (including Walter Raleigh) felt that their presence in America was necessary for the strength of the country and to diminish this danger, the English government did not have the resources to establish a foothold in the New World. As a result, all English enterprises in the Atlantic were to be financed and fostered by private investors who received authorization from the English government.¹⁶



Figure. 1. Queen Elizabeth

¹²Ferris, 93-5.

¹³David Stick *Roanoke Island, The Beginnings of English America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 20.

¹⁴Bolton and Marshall, 104-5; Ferris, 95.

¹⁵For more background information on the diplomatic relations between England and Spain, see Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 312-36.

¹⁶Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Roanoke, The Abandoned Colony* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allenheld, 1984), 3.

HOSTILITIES BETWEEN ENGLAND AND SPAIN

England was a relatively weak nation in the sixteenth century, when France and Spain were the major powers in Europe.¹⁷ As internal conflicts between Catholic and Protestant forces engulfed many nations (including France), Spain, bolstered by the wealth of the New World, began consolidating power and control over Europe. Many Englishmen felt that Spain's goal was to bring their country back under the control of the Catholic Church. Spain's resources in America played a major part in this campaign; the country needed the wealth of the New World to enlarge its boundaries and increase its power. The English government then realized that attacking Spanish treasure ships was an ideal way to fight the enemy.¹⁸ Consequently, Queen Elizabeth encouraged adventurous sailors such as Francis Drake to smuggle goods from Spanish colonies and prey upon Spanish ships. Indeed, Drake was one of a number of English captains who raided and robbed Central American and European islands owned by Spain.¹⁹

By the 1580s, English sea rovers were regularly attacking Spanish vessels in an effort to control their expanding empire. However, in 1584 a major sea war between England and Spain developed when the Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, was expelled from England for his involvement in a plot against Queen Elizabeth. In retaliation for this act, King Philip II of Spain called for the seizure of all English ships in Spanish ports. England then sent Sir Francis Drake to raid and plunder Spanish possessions in the West Indies. Moreover, to further recoup the losses suffered by English merchants and shipowners, the English government licensed privateers to attack and plunder Spanish and Portuguese vessels.²⁰ Many of the early privateers in this open sea war with Spain were gentlemen such as Sir Walter Raleigh, who saw the venture as a patriotic act as well as a way to amass large fortunes and relieve themselves of financial difficulties.²¹

¹⁷"Ibid., 4; David Beers Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke, Voyages and Colonies, 1584-1606* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 14.

¹⁸Kupperman, 5.

¹⁹In 1577 Francis Drake "disappeared" on an overseas voyage, only to reappear three years later with a large amount of goods stolen from Spanish possessions on the Pacific Coast. Drake also formally claimed upper California for England and renamed the area New Albion, thus reasserting England's right to possessions in North America (Quinn 1985, 15).

Both John Hawkins and Francis Drake, two of the most successful rovers, were knighted for their exploits (Ferris, 96-7).

²⁰Quinn 1985, 15-6; Kupperman, 5-7. Privateering originally developed as a way for merchants to recover the value of cargo lost on the high seas. It differed from piracy, in theory, since it had government authorization and was limited to a specific enemy, in this case the Spanish (Kupperman, 7-9).

²¹Kupperman, 5-7.

EARLIEST COLONIZATION EFFORTS AT ROANOKE ISLAND

The first true English colonization efforts, which led to the Roanoke voyages, developed as a way to indirectly attack Spanish possessions during the privateering sea war.²² They also arose from the continuous search for a Northwest Passage to the Orient. Among the first to propose these measures was Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Raleigh's half-brother. For several years, Gilbert had appealed to Queen Elizabeth to explore the New World and colonize the area. Gilbert first urged the English to explore North America in 1576, when he publicly declared that a passage existed through the American continent to Asia.²³ One year later, in 1577, Gilbert wrote a discourse suggesting that Queen Elizabeth dispatch a fleet of warships as a means of disrupting Spanish commerce with the New World. He also proposed the establishment of a permanent English



Figure 2. Sir Humphrey Gilbert

settlement in America to serve as a base of operations against Spanish shipping. Queen Elizabeth eventually listened to his pleas, and in June 1578 granted Gilbert a charter authorizing him to "discover, search, find out and view such remote heathen and barbarous lands, countries, and territories not actually possessed of any Christian Prince or people."²⁴

With financial backing from a number of influential shareholders, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Raleigh, and seven ships sailed from Plymouth in November 1578 to establish a colony in Newfoundland.²⁵ Although Raleigh had no previous experience at sea, he commanded the *Falcon*, whose pilot was the Portuguese navigator Simon Fernandes. As Gilbert had proposed

²²For more information on English privateering and the founding of colonies in the New World, see Kenneth R. Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering, English Privateering During the Spanish War, 1585-1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

²³Kupperman, 10. Another proponent of the Northwest Passage was Martin Frobisher, who made three voyages to the northeast part of North America between 1576 and 1578. In 1578 he led an expedition to Frobisher Bay and intended to establish a settlement there. The founding of the colony was postponed and eventually abandoned when several of the supply ships did not reach the site. John W. Walker and Allen H. Cooper, *Archaeological Testing of Aerial and Soil Resistivity Anomaly FORA A-1, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, North Carolina* (Tallahassee, FL: Southeast Archaeological Center, National Park Service, 1989), 6-7; Ferris, 97.

²⁴Quoted in Stick 1983, 29.

²⁵Quinn 1985, 5-6; Ferris, 97-8.

earlier, the underlying mission of the expedition was to prey upon Spanish shipping.²⁶ Storms, however, forced Gilbert to abort the mission and return to England. In 1583, Gilbert headed another expedition, which ended in disaster when Gilbert was lost at sea.²⁷



Figure 3. Sir Walter Raleigh

Walter Raleigh, however, did not join the second venture. By this time he had become a favorite of Queen Elizabeth, who forbade him to sail on such a dangerous voyage. As the Queen's favorite, Raleigh received vast estates in Ireland and large holdings in England, as well as the patent on wines and the license to export woolen cloths. Other benefits included the assignment of various government offices. Moreover, in 1584 (a year after Gilbert's death), Queen Elizabeth knighted Raleigh and granted him Gilbert's patent to establish colonies in America.²⁸

Raleigh, like Gilbert, aimed to establish a settlement which would serve as a base for English privateering ventures against Spanish ships. Indeed, privateering considerations dictated the location of the settlement and the nature of the first colonists, as well as the source of income to finance the expedition. Many of the 'colonists' on Raleigh's first voyage were veterans of Irish or European wars, who could theoretically defend the settlement against a Spanish attack. In addition, instead of exploring the northern coast of America like Gilbert, Raleigh directed his efforts farther to the south, purposely venturing into Spanish interests to find a semi-secluded location close to Spanish shipping routes from the West Indies. Spain considered the North American coastline south of the Chesapeake Bay as part of her sphere of influence and had established a series of forts along the coast to defend the territory. Moreover, Spanish forces attacked any other attempted settlements in the region, wiping out the French settlement, Fort Caroline, in 1565.²⁹ By establishing a colony within Spain's purported

²⁶Kupperman, 10. As Kupperman points out, Raleigh's appointment illustrates the Elizabethan principle that social status was more important than skill in commanding missions. This fact would plague many future colonization attempts, where inexperienced leaders would unwisely command colonists.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 10-1.

²⁸Kupperman, 11-2; For more information on Sir Walter Raleigh and his achievements, see David Beers Quinn, *Raleigh and the British Empire* (London: The English University Press, 1947), 31-2, 35-46.

²⁹Kupperman, 13-5; Charles W. Porter, III, *Adventurers to a New World, The Roanoke Colony, 1585-87* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1972), 2-3.

holdings, and close to their shipping lines, Raleigh was directly confronting Spanish authority in the area.

On April 27, 1584, Raleigh's first expedition left England for the North American coast. Raleigh did not accompany the fleet, and Captains Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe commanded the two ships. Simon Fernandes, whose knowledge of navigation was to make him a key figure in many Roanoke Island enterprises, piloted the vessels.³⁰ The expedition first sailed to the West Indies, and, on July 13, 1584, landed on the present-day North Carolina coast approximately 24 miles north of Roanoke Island.³¹

The expedition made an important contact with local Native Americans, including a well-placed member of a ruling family, Granganimeo. The indigenous population of the area consisted of members of the Algonquian language group, which meant local tribes spoke a dialect based on this common language. The Carolina Algonquians lived in villages of one to two hundred people containing a central open space around which long, barrel-roofed houses were organized. The houses also had walls and roofs of woven mats or bark and sleeping benches.³² The chiefs, or werowances, usually controlled between six and eight villages, although some ruled as many as eighteen and could gather seven to eight hundred warriors. Those governing large groups may have placed relatives in other villages as observers, advisors, or ruling members.³³ Granganimeo, a brother of Wingina (who governed the Roanoke tribe), oversaw the Native American village on the north end of Roanoke Island and would later be a significant figure for the Roanoke colonies.³⁴ Barlowe and seven other members of the expedition even visited Granganimeo's pallisaded settlement, which Barlowe described:

[T]he evening following we came to an island, which they call Roanoke, distant from the harbor by which we entered seven leagues; and at the north end thereof was a village of nine houses, built of cedar and fortified round about with sharp trees to keep out their enemies, and the entrance into it made like a

³⁰Porter 1972, 6.

³¹Ibid.; David Beers Quinn, ed., *The Roanoke Voyages 1584-1590* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), vol. I, 78-9; and Gary S. Dunbar, *Historical Geography of the North Carolina Outer Banks* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 8.

³²Kupperman, 45-6.

³³Ibid., 50-1.

³⁴Ibid., 69-72, 74-5.

turnpike, very artificially. When we came towards it, standing near unto the water's side, the wife of Granganimeo, the king's brother, came running out to meet us, very cheerfully and friendly.³⁵

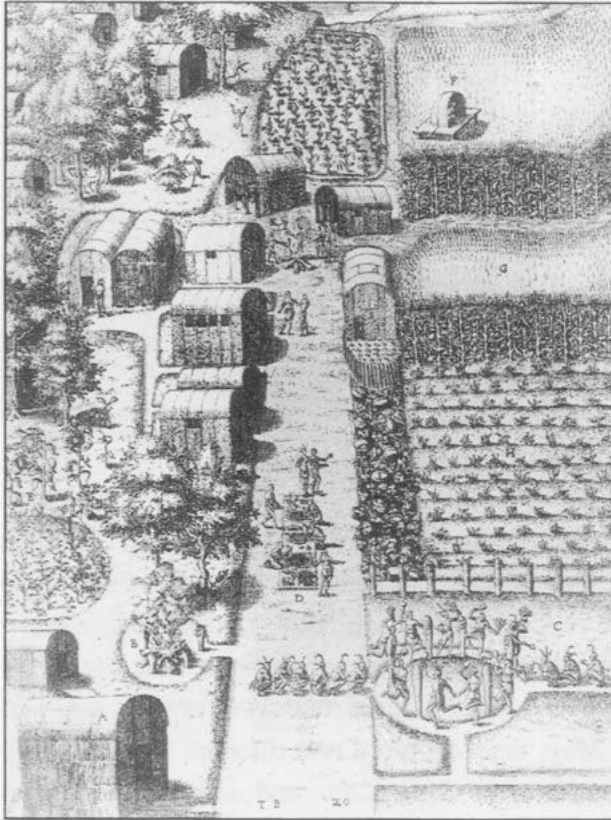


Figure 4. Native American village of Secotan

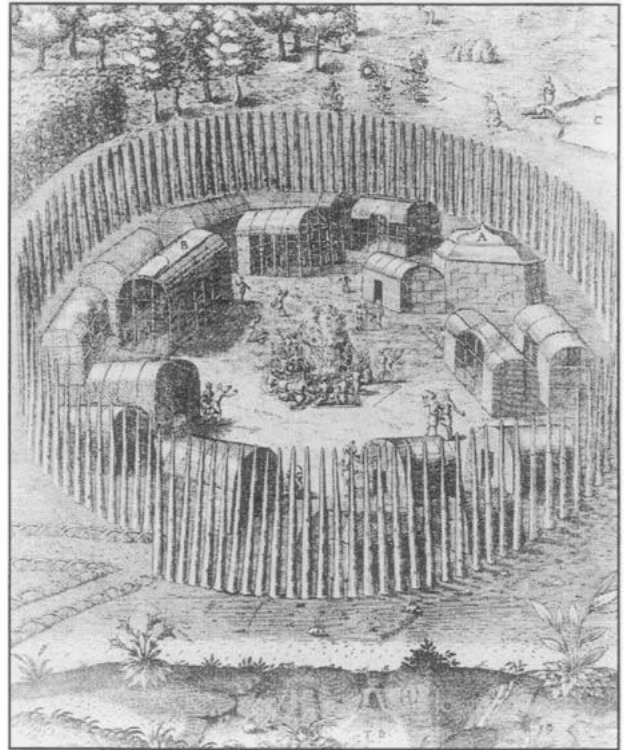


Figure 5. Native American village of Pomeiooc. The Roanoke settlement probably looked similar

Two local Algonquians, Manteo (Croatoan tribe) and Wanchese (Roanoke tribe) returned with the expedition to England with the hopes that they would better describe and help promote the area.³⁶ Amadas and Barlowe left for England in September 1584 and reported favorably on the Outer Banks area, suggesting that it would be an ideal site for a settlement. With Queen

³⁵Richard Hakluyt, *Explorations, Descriptions, and Attempted Settlements of Carolina, 1584-1590*, ed. David L. Corbitt (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1948), 19. Archaeologists have made several attempts to locate the remains of this Native American village. There is evidence of Native American occupation on the north end of Roanoke Island, and archeological investigations have uncovered numerous artifacts. For more information concerning these findings, see William G. Haag, *The Archaeology of Coastal North Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 62-4.

³⁶Thomas Hariot, who accompanied the 1585 expedition to Roanoke Island, learned some Algonquian from Manteo and Wanchese. See Kupperman, 16-7.

Elizabeth's permission, Raleigh then christened the new land "Virginia" after her, the Virgin Queen.³⁷

THE FIRST COLONY, 1585-1586

In 1585, Raleigh appointed Sir Richard Grenville, his cousin, to establish a settlement in North America. Grenville, another well-known sea rover or privateer, sailed from England in 1585 with seven vessels and approximately six hundred men, nearly half of them professional soldiers or specialists of some kind.³⁸ Amadas and Fernandes were also part of the expedition, as well as Ralph Lane, a fortifications expert, John White, an artist to record the landscape and flora and fauna, Thomas Hariot, a scientist to collect samples, and Joachim Gans, a metallurgist to assess the commercial potential of the land. The two Native Americans, Manteo and Wanchese, also returned to America on this voyage.³⁹



Figure 6. Sir Richard Grenville

This expedition, like earlier ones, had an underlying mission of preying upon Spanish shipping. The route Grenville chose, via the Canaries and the Spanish West Indies, placed them in Spanish waters. The expedition arrived in Puerto Rico on May 12, and Ralph Lane immediately began erecting a fortified encampment to protect their operations. The explorers also set up a forge to make nails and built a pinnace (a small, sailed vessel) to replace one lost at sea. Before leaving Puerto Rico at the end of May, they captured two Spanish frigates, built a temporary fortification enclosing two salt mounds near Cape Rojo, and seized a supply of salt from the Spanish.⁴⁰

Grenville's expedition landed on the Outer Banks of North Carolina on June 26. After a brief exploration of the Outer Banks and Roanoke Island and contacts with the Native American inhabitants,⁴¹ Grenville returned to England, leaving Ralph Lane in charge of a colony of 107

³⁷Porter 1972, 9; David Beers Quinn and Alison M. Quinn, eds., *The First Colonists: Documents on the Planting of the First English Settlements in North America, 1584-1590* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1982), xxi.

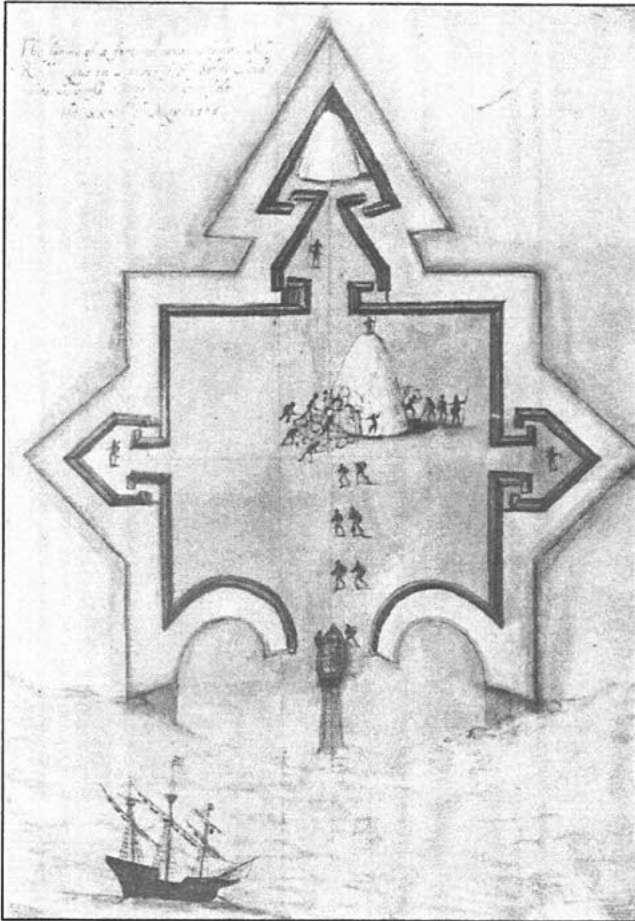
³⁸Quinn, 1955, vol. I, 121-2; Kupperman, 18, 20.

³⁹Porter, 1972, 10.

⁴⁰Ibid., 10-1, 50.

⁴¹Ibid., 11.

men on Roanoke Island.⁴² Since the site was too shallow for a privateering base, Ralph Lane was to use Roanoke as a base to search for a more suitable harbor site. Lane then designed and supervised the construction of a fort at the north end of Roanoke Island.⁴³ Recent scholarship



suggests the fort had palisaded walls with bulwarks on the comers. It was quickly completed, for by September 1585, Lane was writing from “the new Fort in Virginia.”⁴⁴

Ralph Lane’s men also erected a “science center” on the north end of the island to assess the area’s resources and commercial potential. The center probably -contained a metallurgical and/or distilling furnace and a laboratory with needed instruments such as metallurgical crucibles, scales, ointment pots, bottles, distilling flasks, and other glass ware.⁴⁵ Thomas Hariot, a prominent astronomer, mathematician, surveyor, and scientist of the period, and Joachim Gans, a Jewish metallurgist from Prague who went to England in 1581 to help improve its outmoded copper smelting industry, most likely headed the science center, testing ore samples to determine their quality and

Figure 7. Fortified encampment, Puerto Rico. Ralph examining botanical specimens.⁴⁶ As Lane’s fortification on *Roanoke Island* probably Thomas Hariot reported in *A Brief and resembled these earthworks.*

⁴²Quinn and Quinn, xxi.

⁴³Kupperman, 23-4; Jean C. Harrington, *Archaeology and the Enigma of Fort Raleigh* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1984), 7.

⁴⁴Quinn 1955, 168.

⁴⁵Ivor Noel Hume, “First and Lost: In Search of America’s First English Settlement, Archeological Excavations at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Roanoke Island, North Carolina, 1991-3” Draft Report on file at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Manteo, North Carolina, 63-4.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 72-4, 82; Ivor Noel Hume, “Roanoke Island: America’s First Science Center,” *The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*, vol. XVI, no. 3 (Spring 1994); reprint, 7.

True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia:

In two places of the country especially, one about fourscore, and the other sixscore miles from the fort or the place where we dwelt, we found near the water side the ground to be rocky, which by the trial of a mineral man was found to hold iron richly. It is found in many places of the country. I know nothing to the contrary, but that it may be allowed for a good merchantable commodity, considering there the small charge for the labor and feeding of men, the infinite store of wood, the want of wood and dearness thereof in England and the necessity of ballasting of ships.⁴⁷

Other improvements built by the Roanoke colonists included a separate village on the north end of Roanoke Island containing one-and-a-half- and two-story residences with thatched roofs and several other structures. Although some of the soldiers were stationed at the fort, Ralph Lane and several of the gentlemen on the expedition resided in the village. As Ralph Lane reported when uncovering a Native American plot to kill members of the Roanoke colony:

In the dead of night they [several hostile Native Americans] would have beset my house, and put fire in the reeds that the same was covered with; meaning, (as it was likely) that myself would have come running out of a sudden amazed in my shirt without arms, upon the instant whereof they would have knocked out my brains.

The same order was given to certain of his fellows, for M. Hariot, so for all the rest of our better sort, all our houses at one instant being set on fire as afore is said, and that as well for them of the fort, as for us at the town.⁴⁸

The following year, Lane and several members of the colony explored the mainland and surrounding area as far north as the Chesapeake. In the course of these explorations, Lane and his men succeeded in alienating a large portion of the Native American population, resulting in hostile relations between the two. Eventually, Lane and the other explorers abandoned their short-lived and dissension-ridden colony in June 1586.⁴⁹ With the delay in the arrival of

⁴⁷Hakluyt, 67-8.

⁴⁸Ibid., 50-1.

⁴⁹Louis Torres, *Historic Resource Study of Cape Hatteras National Seashore* (Denver: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.), 24.

supplies from Grenville, the colonists grew impatient as provisions ran out and relations with the indigenous population continued to deteriorate. Fortunately, Sir Francis Drake stopped at the colony on a return trip after a successful raid in the West Indies.⁵⁰ Drake offered to resupply the colony and provide them with a ship, or let them return with him to England. A severe storm, however, scattered several of Drake's ships, including the one intended for the colony. The members of Ralph Lane's expedition then accepted Drake's offer to remove them,⁵¹ thereby missing one of Grenville's supply ships by only a short time.⁵² Grenville himself arrived with several ships and relief stores in August and was disappointed to see the colony abandoned. He did not want to lose possession of the settled area and left a holding group of fifteen men with four cannons and supplies for two years to reoccupy Lane's fort.⁵³ According to one account:

Immediately after the departing of our English colony out of this paradise of the world the ship above mentioned sent and set forth at the charges of Sir Walter Raleigh and his discretion, arrived at Hatorask, who after some time spent in seeking our colony up in the country, and not finding them, returned with all the aforesaid provisions into England.

About fourteen or fifteen days after the departure of the aforesaid ship, Sir Richard Grenville, General of Virginia, accompanied with three ships well appointed for the same voyage, arrived there, who not finding the aforesaid ship according to his expectation, nor hearing any news of our English colony there seated,...and finding the places which they inhabited desolate, yet unwilling to lose possession of the country which Englishmen had so long held,

⁵⁰Ibid., 24-5.

⁵¹Quinn and Quinn, 80-1. Walter Briggs, a member of Sir Francis Drake's fleet, wrote:

The ninth of June upon sight of one speciall great fire (which are very ordinarie all alongst this coast, even from the Cape of Florida hither) the Generall sent his Skiffe to the shore, where they found some of our English countrey men (that had bene sent thither the yeere before by Sir Walter Raleigh) and brough them aboard; by whose direction wee proceeded along to the place which they make their Port. But some of our ships being of great draught unable to enter, anchored without the harbour in a wilde roade at sea, about two miles from shore.

From whence the general wrote letters to master Ralfe Lane, being governour of those English in Virginia, and then at his Fort about sixe leagues from the Rode in an Island which they call Roanoac, wherein especially he shewed how ready he was to supply his necessities and wants, which he understood of, by those he had first talked withall (Quinn and Quinn, 80).

⁵²David N. Durant, *Raleigh's Lost Colony* (New York: Athenaeum, 1981), 94-5.

⁵³Ibid., 96-7.

after good deliberation, he determined to leave some men behind to retain possession of the country, whereupon he landed fifteen men in the Isle of Roanoke, furnished plentifully, with all manner of provisions for two years, and so departed for England.⁵⁴

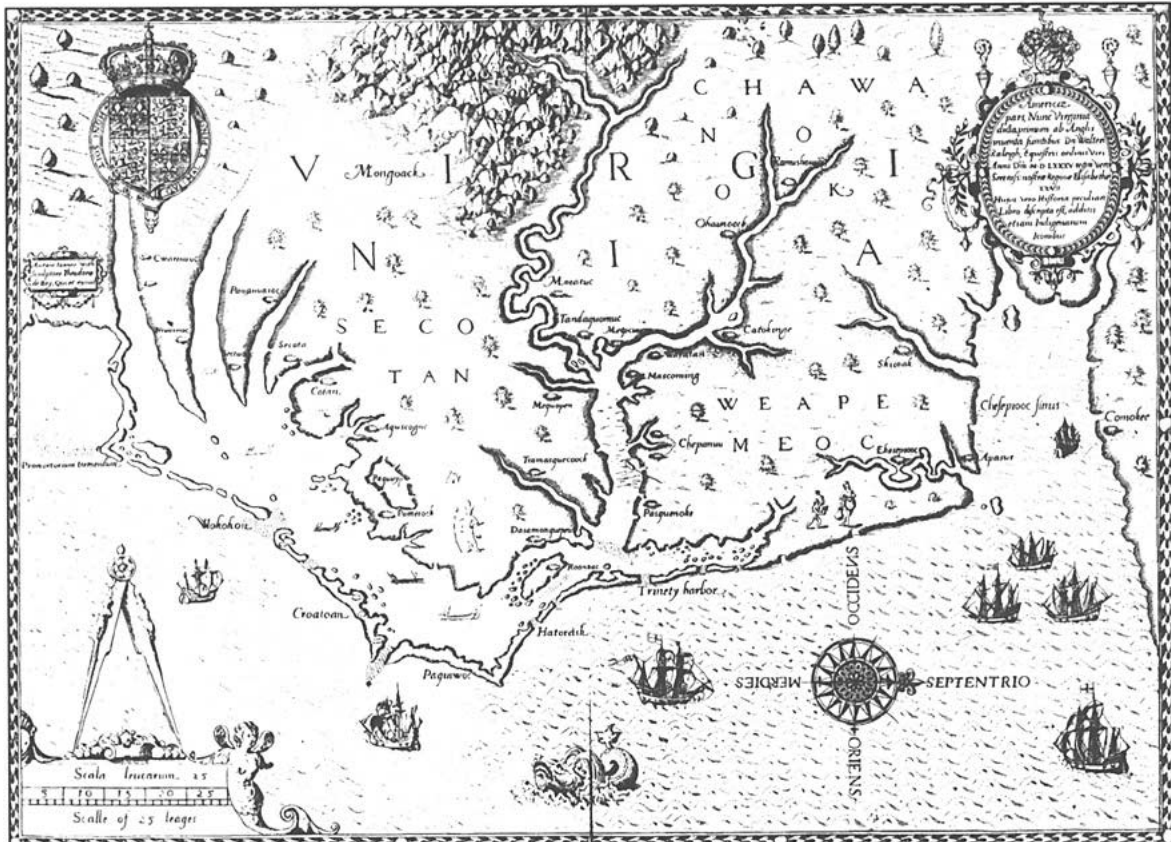


Figure 8. C. 1590 engraving by Theodore De Bry based on John White's watercolor map.

THE LOST COLONY, 1587

The following year, Sir Walter Raleigh organized another expedition to Virginia under the leadership of John White, who had accompanied Grenville on an earlier voyage.⁵⁵ As opposed to previous ventures, this colony was less military and more civilian in nature. Indeed, of the 150 people John White assembled for the voyage, eighty-four men referred to as “planters”, seventeen women, and nine children arrived safely in Virginia and settled there. Moreover,

⁵⁴Hakluyt, 59-60.

⁵⁵For examples of White's artwork from his voyages to North America, see Paul Hutton and David Beers Quinn, eds., *The American Drawings of John White* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964).

rather than having a military government, the colony was organized as a corporation under the direction of Governor John White and his twelve assistants, who served as a board of directors. John White and his twelve assistants were to establish “The Cittie of Raleigh” in Virginia, and Queen Elizabeth granted them and the city arms, or “Ensigns of honor.”⁵⁶ The gentlemen soldiers of Lane’s venture were replaced by simple yeomen, elevated through Raleigh’s intervention to a higher social standing than possible in England. In addition, the colonists themselves took a leading role in the corporation, and could therefore profit from their own efforts.⁵⁷

In many respects, this undertaking set the pattern for later successful English colonization attempts in North America. The fact that this venture was more of a corporate or business enterprise organized by several people prefigured the later English companies that founded successful colonies in North America. In addition, the chosen location for the colony, the Chesapeake Bay area, anticipated the locale of the future Jamestown settlement. Raleigh had intended for John White’s colony to settle in the Chesapeake Bay area, where a better port could be established and conditions for settlement were more favorable.⁵⁸ Ralph Lane had explored the region two years earlier, and it is possible that White was present on that expedition and knew of the area personally.⁵⁹

According to the surnames, it appears that White’s colony included fourteen different families. Four of the families contained a mother, father, and child. Six were unmarried couples. The four others were fathers and sons, who perhaps planned to have their families join them later. In all there were nine children and seventeen women, including John White’s daughter, Eleanor Dare. Seven of the women and three of the boys came without family attachments and were probably servants. The remainder of the 110 colonists were men. The two Native Americans, Manteo and Towaye, returned to Roanoke Island on this expedition as well.⁶⁰

John White and the colonists met in London in early spring 1587. They departed in three small ships, sailing by Portsmouth and Plymouth before finally leaving for North America on May

⁵⁶Quinn and Quinn, 506-9.

⁵⁷Kupperman, 107-8.

⁵⁸Ibid., 107; Porter 1972, 35.

⁵⁹Kupperman, 107.

⁶⁰Ibid., 108-9. See also Hakluyt, 108-9.

8.⁶¹ White kept a journal of the expedition, describing the trip from England to the West Indies, where two of the three ships arrived on June 22.⁶² The third ship became separated from the others in a storm off Portugal but joined them later. Stopping at Saint Croix for three days, the travelers moved on to Puerto Rico, where they took on water and attempted unsuccessfully to resupply their stores.⁶³ Despite White's deteriorating relationship with the Portuguese pilot, Simon Fernandes, the little fleet finally arrived off the Outer Banks on July 16.⁶⁴

On July 22 White and a group of forty colonists went to Roanoke Island to confer with the fifteen men left by Grenville the preceding year. White hoped to learn about the area and their relations with the Indians, and then return to the ships to sail to the intended site of his colony, the Chesapeake Bay area.⁶⁵ White and his colonists, however, discovered Lane's former fort abandoned and Grenville's holding party missing. According to White:

The three and twentieth of July the governor with divers of his company walked to the north end of the island, where Master Ralph Lane had his fort, with sundry necessary and decent dwelling houses, made by his men about it the year

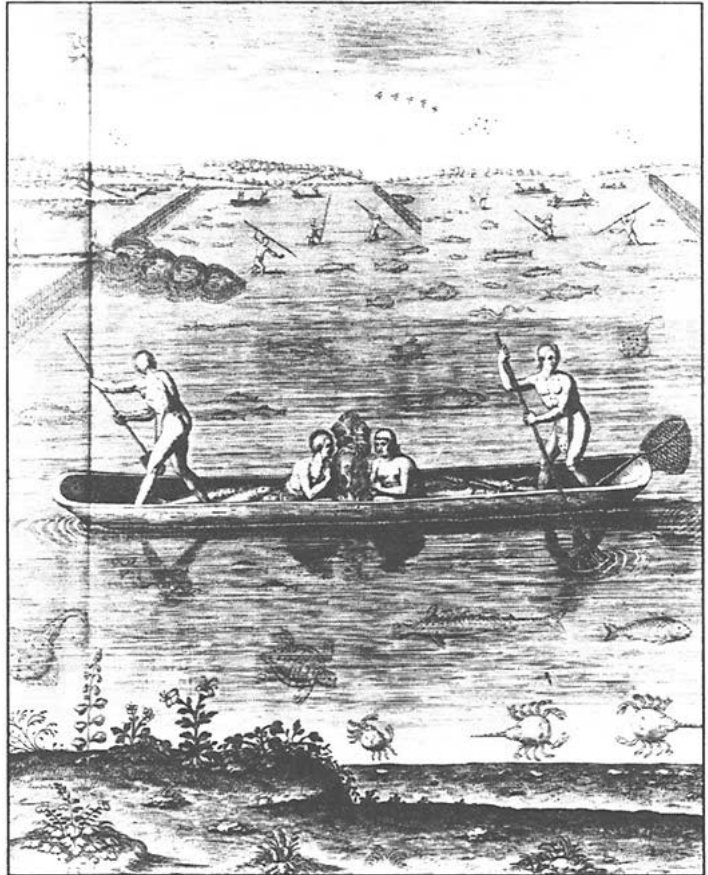


Figure 9. Native Americans fishing. C. 1590 Theodore De Bry engraving based on John White's watercolor.

⁶¹Kupperman, 109.

⁶²For John White's complete account of the journey, see Hakluyt, 94-109.

⁶³Kupperman, 111-2.

⁶⁴Ibid., 112.

⁶⁵Ibid., 112-3.



Figure 10. Native American woman and girl with English doll.

before, where we hoped to find some signs, or certain knowledge of our fifteen men.

When we came thither, we found the fort razed down, but all the houses standing unhurt, saving that the neather rooms of them, and also of the fort, were overgrown with melons of divers sorts, and deer within them feeding on those melons; so we returned to our company, without hope of ever seeing-any of the fifteen men living.⁶⁶

For reasons unclear, Fernandes did not continue the voyage to the Chesapeake Bay and left White and 110 colonists on Roanoke Island.⁶⁷

Upon discovering the fort overgrown and abandoned, White immediately ordered the members of the colony to refurbish Lane's former settlement. According to his account of the expedition, "the same day [July 23] order was given that every man should be employed in the repairing of those houses, which we found standing, and also to make other new

cottages, for such as should need."⁶⁸ White and his colony began their work optimistically; they cleaned and repaired the existing dwellings and built additional shelters, for each family was to have its own residence. The missing ship arrived on July 25, further encouraging the small group.⁶⁹ This settlement was in essence "The Cittie of Raleigh," the community John

⁶⁶Hakluyt, 99.

⁶⁷Quinn 1985, 279-82.

⁶⁸Hakluyt, 99.

⁶⁹Kupperman, 114.

White and his twelve assistants were directed to establish in Virginia.⁷⁰

This initial optimism was checked within a few days of their arrival when one of the colonists, George Howe, was killed by an unidentified party of Native Americans. However, his isolation at the time of his murder suggests that the colonists had not taken precautions, despite the fact that none of the members of Grenville's holding party were found. There were also indications that most may have been murdered, for when White and the group of colonists first landed on Roanoke Island, they discovered the bones of one of Grenville's men, who had long since been slain.⁷¹ White nonetheless placed his hopes (in part) on his ability to reestablish good relations with the Algonquian residents. He was helped in this by Manteo, the Croatoan who had traveled a second time to England with Lane and returned with White.⁷²

One major problem for the settlement was the lack of supplies. The arrival of the colonists late in the planting season resulted in inadequate stores for the winter. The local inhabitants had little to share, and this scarcity created tension. White soon learned of the fate of the Grenville holding party and began to sense the growing unease among the various local groups. Shortly after Howe's death, White and the colonists discovered that three settlements of Native Americans had joined together and attacked eleven of Grenville's men. The soldiers who survived the assault fled by boat, picked up the remaining four men, and disappeared.⁷³ As a gesture of strength, White undertook a punitive expedition to avenge these deaths, raiding one inland settlement without warning and killing at least one. Unfortunately, the group that White's colonists attacked was unconnected with Howe's death, and even the remaining friendly Native American groups began to become wary of this second colony.⁷⁴

Several events in the beginning of August, however, cheered the colonists. On August 13, following Sir Walter Raleigh's orders, Manteo was christened and given the title of Lord of Dasamonguepeuc for his faithful service to the English. Five days later, Eleanor Dare, daughter of John White and wife of Ananias Dare, gave birth to a daughter. Because she was

⁷⁰It should be remembered that Raleigh originally planned for John White to settle "The Cittie of Raleigh" as a separate venture from Roanoke Island on the Chesapeake Bay. Archaeologists are still searching for the habitation site of the colony on Roanoke Island. See Porter 1972, 47-53; and Harrington 1962.

⁷¹Hakluyt, 99.

⁷²Kupperman, 114-5.

⁷³For John White's account of this event, see Hakluyt, 101-2.

⁷⁴Kupperman, 116-7.

the first child born to English parents in America and the first Christian born in Virginia, she was named Virginia.⁷⁵ Although another child was born to Dynois and Margery Harvie shortly thereafter, Virginia Dare's birth was to assume great significance, especially during the later "preservation" period in the history of Fort Raleigh.⁷⁶

Having delivered the colonists, the fleet was scheduled to leave in August. The colonists wanted at least two of the twelve assistants to return, secure more supplies, and recruit more members. Three of the original directors were still in England, presumably working on the colonists' behalf. Finally, the men approached White, asking him to act for them. Not trusting the colonists, and fearful of his position (as well as the safety of his own daughter and granddaughter), White was reluctant to play the part of emissary. With further pressure from the colonists, White finally agreed to return.⁷⁷

White sailed for England on August 27 with all three vessels to obtain the needed supplies. Before departing, he arranged for the colonists to leave an appropriate sign if they moved the settlement. In October 1587, White finally arrived in England. His efforts to obtain support, however, were impeded by the Spanish Armada's attempted invasion of England as well as the subsequent sea war between the two countries. Spain not only raided English ships, she also sought to destroy the English colony in North America. In June of 1588 the Spanish governor at St. Augustine sent a ship northward to find the English settlement and prepare to attack it. After locating Roanoke colony and discovering its weakness, the Spanish considered the assault unnecessary and postponed it.⁷⁸

It was nearly three years before the threat of a Spanish attack had subsided and John White could return to Roanoke. In March 1590, White sailed as a passenger on a ship commanded by the privateer John Watts.⁷⁹ White finally reached the Outer Banks in August 1590, and found that the colony had been abandoned for some time. According to the arrangement between White and the colonists, the word "C-R-O-A-T-O-A-N" was inscribed on a tree, indicating a

⁷⁵Porter 1972, 37.

⁷⁶See William S. Powell, *Paradise Preserved: A History of the Roanoke Island Historical Association* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 52-62.

⁷⁷Kupperman, 119-20.

⁷⁸Porter 1972, 39-41.

⁷⁹Kupperman, 127-8.

native group or village on what is now Hatteras Island.⁸⁰ Although White could not locate the colonists, he was relieved to discover a sign of their safety and noted:

as we entered up the sandy bank, upon a tree, in the very brow thereof were curiously carved these fair Roman letters, C-R-O: which letters we presently knew to signify the place, where I should find the planters seated according to a secret token agreed upon between them and me at my last departure from them; which was, that in any ways they should not fail to write or carve on the trees or posts of the doors the name of the place 'where they should be seated; for at my coming away they were prepared to remove from Roanoke fifty miles into the main. Therefore at my departure from them in An. 1587, I willed them, that if they should happen to be distressed in any of those places, that then they should carve over the letters or name a cross + in this form; but we found no such sign of distress. And having well considered of this, we passed toward the place where they were left in sundry houses, but we found the houses taken down, and the place very strongly enclosed with a high palisado of great trees, with curtains and flankers, very fort-like; and one of the chief trees or posts at the right side of the entrance had the bark taken off and five foot from the ground in fair capital letters, was graven C-R-O-A-T-O-A-N, without any cross or sign of distress; this done, we entered into the palisado, where we found many bars of iron two pigs of lead four iron fowlers, iron locker shot, and such like heavy things thrown here and there, almost overgrown with grass and weeds.... I greatly enjoyed that I had safely found a certain token of their safe being at Croatoan, which is the place where Manteo was born, and the savages of the islands our friends.⁸¹

Because of stormy weather and John Watt's impatience, White was unable to continue the search for the missing colonists on the Outer Banks and returned to England. White could not afford to finance another expedition to North America, and eventually accepted the loss of his family and the Roanoke colony several years later. Raleigh, however, made one more attempt to locate the settlement. As late as 1602, Raleigh sent an expedition to North America under the command of Samuel Mace to find the colonists. The group did not search very diligently and never found these early settlers. After the establishment of Jamestown in 1607, the Virginia colonists attempted to locate their lost countrymen. Although they heard many rumors

⁸⁰Stick 1983, 209-10; Kupperman, 130-1.

⁸¹Hakluyt, 122-3.

as to their whereabouts, the search was unsuccessful.⁸² Many scholars have since proposed numerous theories as to what happened to the Roanoke colonists, but their fate still remains a mystery.⁸³



Figure 11. C. 1590 engraving by Theodore De Bry entitled "The arrival of Englishmen in Virginia." Based on John White's watercolor map.

LATER ENGLISH COLONIZATION IN NORTH AMERICA

The Roanoke Island colony, while never successful, set the precedent for future English colonization efforts in the New World. Between 1602 and 1605, Bartholemew Gosnold and George Weymouth made reconnaissance voyages along the Atlantic coast.⁸⁴ Joint-stock companies underwrote further efforts over the rest of the decade. George Popham, representing

⁸²Porter 1972, 44-5.

⁸³For various conjectures as to the possible fate of the Roanoke colonists, see Stick 1983, 225-46; Quinn 1985, 341-77; Quinn and Quinn 1983, x-xi; and Kupperman, 137-41.

⁸⁴Ferris, 100.

the Plymouth Company, established a temporary colony in 1607 on the mouth of the Kennebec River in Maine.⁸⁵ Beginning in 1606, the southern counterpart to the Plymouth Company, the London Company (later known as the Virginia Company), sponsored a colonizing expedition to Virginia.⁸⁶ This group of 145 men, mostly professional soldiers, arrived at Cape Henry on April 26, 1607. On May 13, they established a site for the colony along the James River, naming it James Forte or Jamestowne, after King James. Although it was a swampy area about thirty miles from the sea, the site provided good docking facilities and was strategically well situated for defense against the indigenous inhabitants. This would be the beginning of the first successful English colony in the New World.⁸⁷ While the colony's existence remained precarious for many years, its eventual success encouraged further English settlement of North America. The English colonies that would later flourish along the eastern seaboard included Plymouth, Massachusetts (1620), New Jersey (1629), Connecticut (1633), Rhode Island (1636), New Haven (1637), Maryland (1637), and Delaware (1638).⁸⁸

The short settlement period of Roanoke Island represented the first attempt at English colonization in the New World. Colored in part by continuing interests in privateering and in merely harassing Spanish concerns in the New World, the Roanoke colonization efforts marked the transition from a military outpost to a settlement of both men and women attempting to establish a permanent foothold in North America. Followed by the successful colony at Jamestown, the early colonizing efforts on Roanoke Island set the precedent for what would eventually become the English dominance of much of North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

The Fort Raleigh National Historic Site preserves the location of the science center associated with Ralph Lane's 1585-1586 colony and commemorates the first English attempts at establishing a colony in North America. The site of the center, presumably supervised by Thomas Hariot, a prominent scientist of the period, and Joachim Gans, a Jewish metallurgist from Prague, is one of the few positively identified archeological resources within the historic site associated with this significant event in American history. In the late sixteenth century the

⁸⁵Ibid.; Chitwood 63-5.

⁸⁶Marshall and Bolton, 116-7.

⁸⁷Ferris, 100-5. For more information on the founding of Jamestown and its relationship to the Roanoke colonies, see Ivor Noel Hume, *The Virginia Adventure, Roanoke to Jamestown: An Archeological and Historical Odyssey* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

⁸⁸Ibid., 115.

north end of Roanoke Island also contained the settlement site of the Roanoke colonists, a fortification built by Ralph Lane's soldiers, and a Native American village. However, no archeological findings from these important sites have been uncovered, and structures or remains may have long since eroded into the sound as the coast line changed over the years. Nonetheless, these important resources could still be located within the park's boundary. More archaeological research is needed to determine the location of Ralph Lane's fortification and the habitation site of the Roanoke colonists, referred to by some as the "Cittie of Raleigh." Further archeological investigations could provide some information on the Native American village of "Roanoac" as well.

Associative Characteristics/Significance

The site of the science center associated with the Roanoke colonies has national significance under National Register Criterion D (Information Potential). It represents the only tangible evidence of the Elizabethan age in North America and marks the site of the first English colonizing efforts, which led the way for future successful English colonies in the New World. The science center site is nationally significant under National Register (NR) Criterion D for the proven potential of its archeological resources to yield information on the first English settlement in North America. Although there are no extant structures, and the settlement site and fortification have yet to be located, the archeological findings over the last fifty years document the establishment of a sixteenth-century science center within the NHS boundary which is eligible for the National Register.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS/CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS/INTEGRITY

For a property to be eligible for the National Register, it must not only be significant under the NR criteria, but it must also have integrity, or the ability of a property to convey its significance. Although the evaluation of integrity can be subjective, it is grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. To retain historic integrity, a property must possess several of the aspects of integrity, which are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The National Register site within the park retains integrity of location and setting since archaeological evidence has proven that the area contains the site of a science center associated with the 1585-1586 colony. The area, however, does not retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, or association since none of the structures built by the Roanoke colonists have survived. As such, the property is not considered eligible under Criteria A (Event), B (Person), or C (Design) since there are no remains which cogently reflect the colonies' layout, architecture, or structure, or the people associated with it.

The site, nonetheless, does have the potential to yield important information concerning the first English colonists to North America. Archaeological investigations conducted in 1947-8, 1950, 1964, 1982-3, 1991-3, and 1994-5 have uncovered numerous European artifacts which date the site to the sixteenth century. In addition, these excavations have unearthed a science center related to Ralph Lane's colony of 1585-1586. Continued research may reveal the location of the associated settlements, Ralph Lane's fortification, as well as the site of the Native American village. The site, therefore, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion D, Information Potential.

In recent years, the U. S. Congress has expanded the park's authorized boundary to 512.93 acres, and the NPS now owns 355.45 acres on the north end of Roanoke Island. This new property, however, does not contain any historic structures or known sixteenth-century archeological remains. Archeologists should survey the new area to determine if the site of the Native American village, Ralph Lane's fortification, and the habitation site of the Roanoke colonists could be in this newly acquired territory. With these possible finds, this new park land is considered potentially eligible for the National Register until a comprehensive archeological survey can accurately evaluate the area. These investigations must be completed before the park service develops any portions of this new NPS property.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES/CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

"science center" (c. 1585-6), contributing as an archaeological site of national significance.

POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE ARCHEOLOGICAL(UNLOCATED)RESOURCES

"Cittie of Raleigh," settlement site of the Roanoke colonists (c. 1585-1590).

"Roanoac," Native American settlement site.

"Ralph Lane's New Fort in Virginia," fortification of the Roanoke colonists (c. 1585-1590)